

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

February 25, 1984

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE DIRECTOR OF THE CIA

FROM : George P. Shultz *gps*

Bill:

Attached is a highly sensitive paper which has been forwarded by Bud McFarlane to the President. It will form the basis for a meeting on Wednesday afternoon. Please regard this paper as being for your personal use only and keep it under your personal control.

Attachment: U.S.-Soviet Relations:
A Framework for the Future

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U.S. - Soviet Relations
A Framework for the Future

What are the prospects for U.S.-Soviet relations in 1984? What should be our approach?

I. Premise

Chernenko's selection as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party may provide an opportunity to put our relations on a more positive track. Even before Andropov died, there were signs that the Soviets were accepting the necessity for an intensified dialogue. Now they have started to diminish their hostile rhetoric somewhat and have indicated a readiness to examine privately proposals for solving some problems.

As a Soviet leader, Chernenko has many initial weaknesses. He may have come to power as the head of a relatively weak coalition, and his freedom to maneuver may be severely circumscribed. His public image is not strong, and he may well turn out to be only a brief transitional figure. Nevertheless, he probably does not view himself in that light, and we can assume that he will attempt to consolidate his power and put his own stamp on history. In that effort, an ability to improve relations with the United States would be an important asset to him, and to be seen publicly dealing with you as an equal would bolster his image greatly in the Soviet Union. In short, he needs you more than you need him, and he knows it.

This does not mean that he can sell the store. Crucial strategic decisions will continue to be made by a collective--essentially the same collective which ran things under Andropov. But it is likely that this collective had already begun to recognize the need for the Soviet Union to adjust some of its policies before Andropov died, and Chernenko's accession could hasten that process. The change of the face at the top could make it easier to adjust policies, implicitly blaming past failures on the "previous administration."

To say that these things could happen is, of course, not the same as saying that they will, or even that the odds favor them happening. The Soviets still harbor a deep and fundamental hostility to your Administration, are tough and cynical bargainers, and will be reluctant to do anything that they believe would facilitate your reelection and vindicate your policy of strength.

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Your reelection is of strategic importance for the United States in establishing an effective long-term policy for dealing with the Soviet threat. This means that we must stress in public your call for dialogue and your desire to reduce tensions and solve problems. Tangible progress and a summit that produced positive results could be helpful if the Soviets decide to bite the bullet and adjust their policies sufficiently to make this possible. But if they continue to resist realistic negotiation, you must be in a position by late summer or fall to make clear that this is their fault, not yours.

For the next few months, however, we should carefully avoid raising public expectations for a summit or any specific accords with the Soviets. To do so would gravely weaken our negotiating leverage with the Soviets, and leave a public impression of failure if they refuse to deal with us realistically. In private, however, we should promptly begin to explore the possibilities for moving ahead in some important areas, and to test Chernenko's willingness and ability to meet at least some of our legitimate concerns. If we play our cards right, we may well be able to induce Chernenko to pay something in advance for the improvement in relations and summit which would be very helpful to him personally.

On the Soviet side, one principal argument against meeting our concerns in some important areas is likely to be that your policy is so hostile that no accommodation is possible, and any attempt to negotiate seriously would only result in Soviet concessions without a deal. It is, therefore, in our interest to make it clear that we will negotiate seriously if the Soviets are willing to meet our legitimate concerns. Such a posture would not only maximize whatever chances exist for major agreements in 1984, but would provide a sound basis for rapid progress in 1985, if the Soviets are unable to get their act together until then, or if they hold back for fear of helping you get reelected. We should not, of course, attempt to stimulate their interest by making prior concessions of substance. This would only encourage them to continue on their track of trying to get concessions from us without making any of their own. Indeed, our aim should be to obtain some prior concessions from them, particularly if you are to agree to a summit. In this regard we should recognize that there are doubtless limits on what Chernenko can deliver; he can hardly pull Soviet troops out of Afghanistan or make major decisions of strategic significance. But he can deliver on such matters as human rights cases and Jewish emigration if he wishes.

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All of this suggests that we should move rapidly to put more content into the dialogue, and to search for more efficient modalities. We should stick to the broad agenda set forth in your January speech, but need to concentrate particular attention on issues where the Soviets can find a direct interest in responding. Regarding modalities, we need channels which permit off-the-record frankness and which are isolated from leaks.

While concentrating on communicating with the leadership (whoever that may be at a given moment), we should also expand opportunities for more broad and effective contacts with a wider public, particularly persons now in their forties and fifties (the successor generation).

II. The Substance

It is difficult to predict where on our four-part agenda progress might be possible. In 1983 the Soviets sent a signal in the human rights field by releasing the Pentecostals; this year it could be somewhere else. So we should keep pushing on all fronts, while keeping public expectations low unless and until something concrete materializes.

A. Regional Issues

In our dialogue with the Soviets on regional issues, it will be difficult at this stage to strike direct deals. Thus, our near-term objective would be to engage them in a frank interchange regarding the dangers of given situations. Such a discussion would massage Soviet amour propre by treating them as equals (of sorts). It might also serve to alert us and them to particularly delicate aspects which should be taken into account in policy making. Being seen in consultation with the Soviets on these issues helps allay public anxieties and can increase leverage with other parties. Conceivably, the process could lead to reciprocal unilateral actions which might defuse particularly dangerous aspects of regional conflicts, although this is likely to occur only if relations in other respects improve.

The regional issue most likely to attract genuine Soviet interest is the Middle East -- Lebanon specifically. At this stage, we should steer away from tactical discussions and asking them to do favors, i.e., UNIFIL. Our objective should be to use a larger strategic discussion to stress the danger of events spiraling out of control of either of us and producing an Israeli-Syrian confrontation which would have serious dangers for both of us.

There is also room for a broad discussion of European issues, where we could drive home some of the dangers for Soviet policy of their present "splitting" tactics. And in general we believe our

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emphasis on greater Soviet restraint in unstable regions indicates more routine, substantive exchanges among experts on various regions.

B. Arms Control

Strategic arms limitations represent the central arms negotiations between the US and the USSR. However, for the last three years, INF issues have set the mood for a number of negotiations. Having threatened to walk out of negotiations and to deploy "countermeasures," the Soviet Union is now following through.

Sufficient face-saving formulas exist for the Soviet Union to return when they wish, although they will be very reluctant to return to INF. We should not make concessions to bring them back to START and INF, nor should we create obstacles to their return. Resumption of talks will be accelerated if our allies are firm, major defense programs proceed, walkout is not rewarded, and domestic pressures are controlled.

Nevertheless, the United States can and should take steps designed to enhance the prospects for arms control "windows of opportunity." Resumption of more normal negotiations is most likely in multilateral fora or in low key bilateral negotiations such as the "Hotline" upgrade talks, especially if the United States is not perceived as gaining significant public diplomacy advantages. This is consistent with the current Soviet effort to keep political pressure on the Alliance and this Administration.

If, however, the new leadership in Moscow should decide that a major US/USSR arms control initiative might be in their interest, then START is the most likely arena for movement. Prior to the Soviet walkout from START we had indicated that we had some flexibility in basic approaches to trade-offs between areas of US and Soviet interest. Clarification of approaches to these trade-offs could play an important role in creating the climate for agreement in principle or a resumption of negotiations.

Although the Alliance is adamant that we should not make concessions in order to get the USSR to return to the INF talks, Moscow's unwillingness to discuss Soviet LRINF systems presents it with a political vulnerability. The United States and its allies should continue to press on this issue. As long as the Soviet Union believes that it can put the West on the defensive with the public in areas such as INF deployments and space arms control, it will see less incentive to negotiate on other issues.

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MBFR is important not because an agreement is likely this year or next, but because we have an opportunity to demonstrate that we are serious in our negotiating intent. Our opening position at the next round is thus crucial in conveying the overall message that we are prepared to negotiate seriously. The CDE, the CD in Geneva and bilateral talks on CBM's such as the hot line will have a higher profile than hitherto.

C. Human Rights

While the Soviets will continue to make any discussion on human rights difficult, we should persevere. Last year the Soviets did move on the Pentecostals in the context of improving relations, and we are once again hearing from official Soviets that they see some improvement. We should continue to focus on major cases like Shcharansky, Sakharov and Orlov, and on the need to reopen Jewish emigration. This is an area where deals may be possible if arranged through private, off-the-official-record contacts. If movement in other areas indicate that a summit would be useful, we should push hard for human rights improvements as a precondition.

D. Bilateral

In the bilateral area, Secretary Shultz' meeting with Gromyko opened up a number of possibilities. Gromyko responded positively to the need to examine specific measures to prevent another KAL. Since then, the Soviet representative at ICAO has proposed a US-Japan-USSR group to look at such measures. We have developed a set of specific measures. Our objective should be to reach agreement on these measures this year.

We also should take steps which improve our direct communication and contact with the people in the Soviet Union -- to give practical effect to your own stress on talking directly to the people in your January 16th speech and again in the State of the Union. That is the objective of a consulate in Kiev (strongly supported in recent letters to the Congress and the Administration by Ukrainian-American organizations) and a cultural exchanges agreement.

By moving forward ourselves in these two areas now, we can help to channel in sensible directions the upsurge of interest across the country in greater people-to-people contacts and limit exploitation by the Soviets. Also to avoid naive groups dominating this area, we should try to establish a mechanism for better guidance and coordination of private efforts. This could be used to encourage those with a tougher-minded track record in dealing with the Soviets, i.e., the American Council of Young Political Leaders.

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Some in Congress are interested in inviting a delegation of Supreme Soviet members this year. This could be a way for us to meet possible successors to Chernenko, such as Gorbachev. However, we will want to weigh carefully the risks of negative exploitation.

In other areas of possible bilateral cooperation, the Soviets have not responded formally to our space rescue proposal but informal indications are not promising. There are a variety of other areas of cooperation which could be pursued should we decide to do so.

III. Channels

There are a number of channels we should be utilizing.

We should continue the correspondence with Chernenko, but recognize that it is unlikely that he will be candid, both out of fear his letters will be leaked and in order to protect his negotiating positions. Nonetheless, it is one means of being certain that our views are getting through to the leadership without distortion. And it could help to provide some momentum. (At the moment the ball is in Chernenko's court, since you sent him a letter with the Vice President.)

We also should hold early and regular exchanges between Secretary Shultz and Dobrynin and between Hartman and Gromyko on the full range of our concerns.

On the critical START issue, in the absence of negotiations in Geneva, the Secretary's talks with Dobrynin will be the main channel. As a parallel process we should consider intensifying unofficial informal discussions. Brent Scowcroft is going to Moscow in March and would be able to set forth our views more fully and directly than passing through Dobrynin.

If there is sufficient movement, we should consider another Shultz-Gromyko meeting.

Finally, we should consider some other forms of dialogue. As noted earlier, on regional issues like the Middle East our specialists should meet. In addition, we should consider sending a group of middle-level policy officials to Moscow to cover a broad range of subjects and touch base with key Soviet organizations, including the Central Committee. And military-to-military discussions are a possibility: discussion of such matters as strategic doctrine or comparison of each other's threat assessments might be useful topics.

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IV. Timetable

The following timetable is possible:

--Shultz/Dobrynin within a week to 10 days: further on START framework and propose some of other consultations.

--Hartman/Gromyko: propose Middle East discussion by specialists and/or discussions by policy planners.

--Scowcroft: Brief him on our approach to use privately during his planned trip to Moscow beginning March 8.

--Another Shultz/Gromyko meeting: we should not push for this yet but wait and see how other issues develop. If the Soviets seem interested, we could try to arrange a meeting in May or early June. We also should consider whether to invite Gromyko to Washington to see you when he is here in September for the UNGA.

V. Bureaucratic Preparation

If the Soviets do begin to deal more seriously in areas of interest to us, we must be able to move rapidly in order to sustain momentum. This may require some adjustment of our bureaucratic procedures to make quick decisions possible. It would be useful to clarify as many immediate issues as we can, and to "pre-position" approved negotiating plans, to be used as developments warrant. A list of the more important U.S.-Soviet issues with summaries of their status is attached.

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